

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in reply to the Office Action mailed July 27, 2006.

As an initial matter, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowance of claims 1-35 and 37-48.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 36 and 49-52. The originally-filed specification, drawings, and claims fully support the subject matter of amended claims 36 and 49-52. No new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1-52 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 37, and 49-52 are independent claims.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 36 and 49-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for alleged indefiniteness. Applicants have amended claim 36 to correct an inadvertent dependency error, and amended claims 49-52 to clarify those claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 112, second paragraph rejections.

With regards to the statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter set forth on page 3 of the Office Action, although Applicants agree with the Examiner's ultimate conclusions that the claims are patentable because the prior art does not teach or suggest the claimed features set forth in the claims, Applicants do not necessarily agree with each or every characterization and assertion contained in the Examiner's statement.

Furthermore, it is understood that the Examiner's characterizations were for purposes of referring to the prior art, and do not imply that the claims are limited by

words not actually present in the claims. Therefore, unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization contained in the statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter.

Should the Examiner disagree with the Applicants' comments on the Reasons for Allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at 202-408-4449 in order to resolve such disagreement.

Applicants further submit that each of claims 2-36 and 38-48 depends directly or indirectly from one of independent claims 1 and 37, and each is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that respective independent claims 1 and 37 is allowable. In addition, each of the dependent claims recites unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the references and therefore each is also separately patentable.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In discussing the claims in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants are

entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 25, 2006

By:


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